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ROME FOR FODAG

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR

SUBJ: WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE

1. WE HAVE DEVELOPED PRELIMINARY USG POSITION ON SECRETARY KISSINGER'S PROPOSAL FOR A WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE FOR USDEL AT FAO CONFERENCE BEGINNING NOVEMBER 10. WE INTEND TO USE THIS IN FAO CONFERENCE DISCUSSIONS OF THE PROPOSAL NOW SCHEDULED TO BEGIN NOVEMBER 19. ADDRESSEE POSTS SHOULD CONVEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS POSITION TO HOST GOVERNMENTS EMPHASIZING ALSO OUR DESIRE TO COOPERATE CLOSELY WITH MAJOR IMPORTING AND EXPORTING COUNTRIES IN PLANNING FOR THE WFC.

2. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF USG POSITION PAPER ON WFC FOR FAO CONFERENCE: BEGIN TEXT

PROBLEM

SECRETARY KISSINGER CALLED FOR A WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE UNDER U.N. AUSPICES AS ONE OF HIS FIRST ACTS AS SECRETARY OF STATE. THE U.S. OBJECTIVE IS TO MAKE THIS CONFERENCE A SUCCESS IN EXPANDING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON FOOD ISSUES. U.S. LEADERSHIP IS REQUIRED TO STEER THE CONFERENCE AGENDA TOWARD ISSUES WHERE PROGRESS IS POSSIBLE AND AWAY FROM ITEMS WHICH WILL RESULT IN A WASTE OF TIME OR, WORSE, IN CONFRONTATION AMONG COUNTRIES WITH DIFFERING INTERESTS.

THE PROPOSAL FOR HOLDING A WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE UNDER U.N. AUSPICES IN 1974 WILL BE PUT ON THE FAO CONFERENCE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION. FAO WILL REPORT TO THE RESUMED SESSION OF THE 55TH ECOSOC ON NOVEMBER 23. THE COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE WILL HAVE AN IMPORTANT INFLUENCE ON FURTHER ACTION TAKEN AT ECOSOC AND ULTIMATELY THE 28TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHICH HAS PUT THE ITEM ON THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AGENDA FOR DEBATE. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE U.S. INTERVENTION ON THIS ITEM IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT. EVEN THOUGH THE IDEA OF A WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE HAS NOW BEEN ENDORSED BY DECISION OF ECOSOC, AND THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE WILL ULTIMATELY BECOME A U.N. SPONSORED CONFERENCE, OTHER NATIONS ARE LOOKING TO THE UNITED STATES TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN PROPOSING MORE SPECIFIC TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE WORLD FOOD

CONFERENCE. AGRICULTURE SECRETARY BUTZ WILL INITIATE DISCUSSION OF THIS ITEM IN HIS OPENING SPEECH.

THROUGHOUT DISCUSSION OF THIS ITEM, THE U.S. DELEGATION SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE CAN SERVE TO PREPARE A BROAD POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR DEALING WITH FOOD PROBLEMS. IN PARTICULAR THE WORLD-WIDE CONFERENCE CAN INVOLVE THE U.S.S.R., PRC AND MANY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHICH MAY NOT BE INVOLVED IN OTHER FORA. HOWEVER, THE MTN WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE MOST PROMISING FORUM TO WORK OUT SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS ON AGRICULTURE. IT IS ONLY IN THE MTN THAT WE CAN HOPE TO SECURE IMPROVED MARKET ACCESS FOR OUR EXPORTS. AND IT IS ONLY IN MTN THAT WE CAN BRING THE WEIGHT OF NON-AGRICULTURAL NEGOTIATIONS TO BEAR ON AGRICULTURAL TRADE PROBLEMS.

UNITED STATES POSITION

PURPOSE AND SUBJECT MATTER OF THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE

THE DELEGATION SHOULD NOTE THAT IN THE U.S. PROPOSAL TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE U.N., WE EXPLAINED THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE WOULD BE TO DISCUSS WAYS TO MAINTAIN ADEQUATE FOOD SUPPLIES IN THE FACE OF RISING DEMAND AND COMBAT HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION RESULTING FROM NATURAL DISASTERS. THE UNITED STATES BELIEVES THAT THE PRECISE AGENDA SHOULD BE WORKED OUT IN PREPARATORY MEETINGS BY INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THAT EVERY ATTEMPT SHOULD BE MADE TO FOCUS THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE'S ATTENTION ON FEW KEY TOPICS WHERE EARLY PROGRESS IN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IS POSSIBLE.

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TENTATIVE U.S. THINKING ON THE COMPOSITION OF AN AGENDA IS SET OUT BELOW.

(1) THE FIRST TASK OF THE CONFERENCE WILL BE TO ASSESS THE LONG-TERM DEMAND AND SUPPLY OUTLOOK FOR DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF FOOD. IT WILL BE DESIRABLE TO TAKE A MORE SOPHISTICATED LOOK AT THE MAGNITUDES OF POTENTIAL SURPLUSES OR DEFICITS UNDER "HIGH" AND "LOW" ASSUMPTIONS FOR DEMAND AND SUPPLY THAN HAS BEEN DONE IN THE PAST. BY DEVELOPING THIS TYPE OF INFORMATION, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CAN PLAN INTELLIGENTLY FOR SHORT TERM CONTINGENCIES AND ADJUST PRODUCTION POLICIES FOR LONG RUN BALANCE. IT IS THE U.S. BELIEF, BASED ON OUR OWN ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION, THAT THE WORLD MUST ANTICIPATE BOTH PERIODS OF SHORTAGES AND

PERIODS OF ADEQUATE OR MORE THAN ADEQUATE SUPPLIES. IT IS THE FORMER SITUATION THAT THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE SHOULD FOCUS ON.

(2) AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PACE OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AFFECTING BOTH SUPPLY AND DEMAND FACTORS WILL ALSO BE CRUCIAL TO INTELLIGENT INTERNATIONAL ACTION. AS HAS BEEN ABUNDANTLY ILLUSTRATED BY THE GREEN REVOLUTION, IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY CAN LAG SUBSTANTIALLY AS UNFORESEEN CONSTRAINTS ARE ENCOUNTERED. IT WOULD, THEREFORE, BE USEFUL TO REACH A GREATER INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT WILL BE REQUIRED TO BREAK PRODUCTION BOTTLENECKS AND IMPROVE TECHNIQUES FOR FOOD STORAGE. ON THE DEMAND SIDE, CONSUMER ACCEPTANCE OF NEW VARIETIES OF HIGHER YIELDING CROPS AND SYNTHETIC FOODS MAY BE A GREATER CONSTRAINT THAN TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY OF PRODUCTION. ON THE SUPPLY SIDE, WE MUST SEEK WAYS FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO IMPROVE THEIR OWN FOOD PRODUCTION AND EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES ON AN ECONOMIC BASIS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE A COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE SO THAT DEPENDENCE ON FOOD AID IN THE FUTURE CAN BE LESSENED AND THEY ARE LESS SUBJECT TO THE VAGARIES OF CHANGES IN THE WORLD'S FOOD SUPPLY.

(3) IT IS IMPORTANT NOT TO PREJUDGE THE ISSUE OF THE SUPPLY/DEMAND BALANCE, SINCE MANY EXISTING LONG-TERM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROJECTIONS INDICATE A TENDENCY TOWARD SURPLUS IN COMMERCIAL MARKETS, RATHER THAN SHORTAGES, FOR MOST CATEGORIES OF FOOD FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. IF THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE AGREES ON THE NEED IN ANY CASE TO PROVIDE FOR THE CONTINGENCY OF POSSIBLE SHORTAGES, IT COULD CONSIDER WHAT PRINCIPLES MIGHT ASSURE ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF PARTICULAR CATEGORIES OF FOOD, BOTH IN THE SHORT-TERM AND LONG-RUN.

THUS, AFTER ASSESSING THE SITUATION, THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE MIGHT ADDRESS:

(A) FOOD SECURITY. IF ASSURANCES ON FOOD RESERVES TO SAFEGUARD AGAINST TEMPORARY SUPPLY SHORTFALLS IS JUDGED TO BE A CRUCIAL ISSUE, THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE MIGHT CONSIDER VARIATIONS OF THE CURRENT FAO PROPOSAL FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF FOOD STOCKS. IT SHOULD DEAL WITH THE MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL COUNTRIES, IMPORTING AND EXPORTING, DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING, MARKET ECONOMIES AND CENTRALLY PLANNED, IN CONTRIBUTING TO MAINTENANCE OF ADEQUATE STOCKS. ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE PROVIDED LDCS IN SUCH AREAS AS CONSERVATION AND

STORAGE. THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENTLY-HELD COMMERCIAL (PRIVATE) STOCKS AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF FOOD RESERVES SHOULD BE STRESSED. THE OBJECTIVE MIGHT BE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SET OF PRINCIPLES ON GRAIN STOCKS. THE U.S. DELEGATION SHOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT THE U.S. DOES NOT INTEND TO CARRY RESERVES FOR THE WHOLE WORLD AGAIN.

IN DISCUSSIONS OF FOOD AID THE MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL COUNTRIES SHOULD BE STRESSED. ALL AID GIVING COUNTRIES SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO FOOD AID AND INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION OF FOOD AID SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED. GUIDELINES FOR THE RECIPIENTS AS WELL AS THE PROVIDERS OF FOOD AID SHOULD BE DEVELOPED. IT IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT THAT THE AVAILABILITY OF FOOD AID DOES NOT DISCOURAGE EFFICIENT PRODUCTION IN
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